

KGB Faked Threats to Athletes, U.S. Charges

By PHILIP HAGER, *Times Staff Writer*

CHICAGO—The Soviet KGB fabricated Ku Klux Klan threats sent to Asian and African countries planning to participate in the Olympic Games, Atty. Gen. William French Smith said Monday.

Smith, speaking at the annual meeting of the American Bar Assn., said the United States had confirmed recently that the racist and abusive materials were not produced or sent by the Klan.

"They were instead manufactured and mailed by another organization devoted to terror: the KGB," he said.

"Although I cannot detail all of what we know about these documents for fear of helping the authors to refine their techniques, a thorough analysis—including linguistic and forensic techniques—reveals that they are classic examples of a Soviet forgery or disinformation operation," the attorney general said.

The letters first came to light last month when U.S. officials disclosed that racist mailings, threatening violence to Third World athletes if they participated in the Los Angeles Games, had been received in as many as 20 countries. None of the nations that received the letters changed their plans to attend.

The fact that the senders of the

letters knew the addresses of the national Olympic committees of the countries involved, along with other information, led officials to speculate at that time that the mailings were part of what analysts call "active measures"—a so-called "disinformation" plot by the Soviet intelligence agency to mislead pub-

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lic opinion by planting false documents.

Smith, in his speech, did not say exactly how the United States had confirmed KGB involvement. Afterward, he told reporters his allegation against the Soviets was "quite categorical." FBI Director William Webster, who also was attending the ABA meeting, said confirmation had come "very recently." But he, too, refused to elaborate, saying the government wished to protect its sources. Webster did say, however, that he was "completely satisfied" that the KGB was involved in the bogus letter plot.

The attorney general's speech was the first flat-out assertion that the KGB authored the KKK letters. Earlier, Secretary of State George P. Shultz and other State Department officials had strongly hinted that they believed the Soviet Union was behind the letters.

The letters—received in China, Zimbabwe and South Korea, among other countries—included headlines such as "The Olympics—for Whites Only" and suggestions that "blacks and yellows will not be permitted to defile America's stadiums. We have forced the Soviets out of the Olympics. We shall not permit the apes to be present, either!"

Intelligence agency sources in Washington noted Monday that the KKK logo on the letter does not match any of the other KKK logos now in FBI files. The sources also pointed out that the letters are photocopies, a method traditionally used by forgers because it eliminates most telltale identifying characteristics.

The sources acknowledged they could not rule out that the forgeries actually were the work of another party who had been purposely clumsy in an attempt to blame a heavy-handed KGB. But they ranked such a possibility as "remote."

The techniques used in tracing the forgery to the KGB were not

limited to forensic and linguistic analysis, which one source said came down to "structure and syntax." But this official declined to elaborate on the other methods used.

In an April, 1983, publication on Soviet active measures, the State Department said that forgeries for many years "have been a staple of Soviet 'active measures,'" and that many of them are aimed at the media.

"Although the fabricators are aware that once a document appears in print the supposed author will promptly deny its authenticity, the Soviets calculate that a denial will never entirely offset the damage from news stories based on the forgery," the State Department said.

Noting that the Soviets "have developed considerable technical proficiency in fabricating U.S. government documents," the department analysis added that "even the best forgeries can be unmasked by expert analysis."

"While the Soviets produce authentic-looking documents in many cases, there are almost always small discrepancies and mistakes," the department said. "The texts of some forged documents indicate that they are not prepared by native-born speakers of American English. Phraseology is stilted; British spellings may occur in purported American documents (British forms are widely taught in Soviet schools), and some expres-

sions appear to be literally translated from the Russian."

In the speech, Smith described "active measures" as a Soviet operation intended to influence or affect another country's policies. In the intelligence world, such measures are distinguished from espionage or counterintelligence, he said.

"Active measures are normally approved by the Soviet Politburo itself and they are implemented through the Communist Party Central Committee's International Department and the KGB. . . ." Smith said.

The letters, he said, apparently were intended to help the Soviets justify their boycott of the Games and gain support from non-Communist countries, the attorney general said.

"Through this plot, the Soviet Union, employing cynical falsehood, struck at both the Olympic ideal and the rule of law," he said.

Smith told his audience of lawyers that the "greatest threat to international rule of law arises from the Communist world and the means it utilizes to foster the spread of communism."

He reiterated official assertions that the governments of Cuba and Bulgaria had both engaged in drug trafficking to assist terrorists.

Recently, he observed, the United States had discovered evidence that some officials of the Nicaraguan government may be using the drug trade to finance revolutionary activities.